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*Requirements*

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24 April 1957

ATTN : Chief, St/L/R  
THRU : Chief, D/S  
Chief, S/TR

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Priority Transport Requirements for North Vietnam

The following requirements on transport in North Vietnam are submitted in response to verbal request of [REDACTED] 11 April 1957.

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1. Railroads

a. Report on the progress of Viet Minh railroad construction on the lines Hanoi-Nam Quan, Hanoi-Lao Kay, and particularly on the line extending south from Hanoi through Thanh Hoa, Vinh and Dong Hoi to the 17th parallel. Information especially desired includes indications of broadening of the gauge of any line (particularly the Hanoi-Nam Quan Line) from meter to standard (4 ft. 8½"); any construction of second tracks or sidings; and any evidence of Chinese or Soviet material or personnel assistance.

b. Describe in detail any change-of-gauge transloading station constructed in the Chinese border area (particularly in the Nam Quan area) or elsewhere in Viet Minh territory for transshipment of freight from lines of one gauge to those of another, including method of transloading, number and layout of tracks of each gauge, approximate length of time required to unload and reload one car of freight, and extent of mechanization of loading.

c. Indicate any evidence of the restoration of through rail service between China and North Vietnam on the Kuming-Hanoi-Haiphong line. This should include information concerning bridge reconstruction in the Lao Kay area and any indications of broadening of the gauge from meter to standard on the Chinese side of the border.

d. On those lines where railroad services have been restored by the Viet Minh, report all possible individual locomotive and freight car numbers, including the line on which observed, the type of equipment to which each number is assigned (e.g. gondola, flat, box, or tank cars) and, if available, the country of manufacture of the equipment (e.g. China, USSR, etc.)

e. Report any information obtainable, following the restoration of railroad service, concerning actual freight traffic movement on individual lines, such as the number of trains per day in each direction, approximate average number of cars per train, approximate net or gross tonnage (indicate which) of each car,

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average speed of trains, and any details regarding the type and quantity of freight carried in each direction.

## 2. Roads

a. Describe the characteristics of individual roads throughout North Vietnam, including condition, surface, width, extent of motorability, bridges, ferries, flooding in rainy season, and estimated capacity of roads and bridges. Two trunk routes are of special strategic significance. One is the north-south road linking Nam Quan, on the Chinese border, with the South Vietnam frontier via Lang Son, Bac Minh, Hanoi, Thanh Hoa, and Vinh. The other is an east-west road linking Haiphong with Lai Chau via Hanoi, Hoa Binh, and Son La.

b. Describe the nature and extent of new construction, improvement, or repair of roads by the Viet Minh, with particular emphasis on roads near the Chinese border, leading toward the demarcation line (17th parallel), and leading toward or into northern and central Laos.

c. Collect the maximum possible number of individual registration numbers of Viet Minh military and civilian trucks as shown on license plates or painted markings (indicate which), including whenever possible the type of each truck reported on, the town or area where each truck was observed and any other markings which identify the military or civilian unit operating each vehicle.

## 3. Inland Water

a. What is the size, age, and composition of the inland waterways fleet? What fuel is used?

b. Which inland water routes carry the heaviest traffic? What is the volume and composition of the traffic? What are the factors limiting the volume of traffic on each water route (size of locks, depth of channel, etc.)? When are the periods of heaviest traffic on the inland waterways? What is the cargo moving in greatest volume at this time?

c. Where are the ship construction facilities? What types and sizes of vessels do they construct?

d. Describe the physical condition of the inland waterways (e.g. silting problems, reefs, small or antiquated locks, etc.) What is being done to improve these conditions?

e. What are the daily loading and unloading capacities of the inland water ports? What mechanical loading and unloading

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facilities are available at each port? How much traffic does each port handle in a year?

f. What are the rates charged for inland water transport?

4. Coastal Shipping

a. What is the size and composition of the coastal fleet? Specifically, what proportion of the fleet is composed of junks?

b. What routes are served by the fleet? Which, if any, are served on a scheduled basis?

c. What is the volume and composition of the traffic carried along the coast? What proportion of total traffic is carried by junks? When are the periods of heaviest traffic on the coastal routes? What is the cargo moving in greatest volume at this time?

d. What are the daily loading and unloading capacities of the coastal ports? What mechanical loading and unloading equipment is available at each port? How much traffic passes through each port in a year?

e. What rates are charged for coastal water transport?

5. Air

a. Report any details available concerning Viet Minh civil aircraft, including type, number, and nature of operations.

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